The Household.

"She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."—Proverbs.

EDITED BY MRS. L. B. ADAMS.

The State and County Fairs.

From the latter part of September to the middle of October, the fairs have been the all-absorbing objects of interest to the farming community. We have noticed the reports in the papers of the several counties where fairs have been held, and find them almost without exception, of the most encouraging kind, speaking generally as well for the show of farm produce and manufactures as for the multitudes of people in attendance, and confirming the idea of the utility of these annual exhibitions of home industry and ingenuity.

As many of the fairs were held simultaneously on the same days of the month, it was not possible for one to attend all; we therefore took advantage of the best opportunities offered, and spent a day at each of those most conveniently within our reach and means.

Of the State fair it is hardly worth while to speak to any extent in this department, as all that is worth noting as contributing to make it a State exhibition will be found in other pages. Comparatively few articles of home manufacture were brought in from the country, and, with three or four exceptions, all the contributions from ladies were confined to Wayne and Oakland counties. Shiawassee sent some good woolen blankets and mittens, made by Mrs. M. Castle; Washtenaw some excellent butter, by Mrs. De Garmo; Hillsdale a worked collar, by Nettie O. Baxter; St. Clair a patch work quilt by Mrs. McConnell; and Monroe, pickles and preserves by Mrs. Haskell. All other household articles mentioned among the awards of premiums as entered by ladies, were either from Wayne or Oakland. That this was not because other counties had nothing to send, is abundantly proved by a glance at the published lists of premiums awarded at the different county fairs, as well as by what we have observed at those we have been able to attend. Except as a horse and cattle show, there seems to be a lack of general interest in the State exhibition, and farmers' wives and daughters at a distance from the city, reserve the evidences of their handiwork for exhibitions nearer home. There may be many good local reasons for their doing so, but it is a course which detracts seriously from the credit of the State society, and from the interest of its annual fairs, besides giving a very wrong and unfavorable impression to visitors from abroad. A little energy and state pride would overcome many of the trifling obstacles that now stand in the way of the success of the society, and which prevent it from being what it should be, a fair representative of the industrial resources of the State.

WASHTENAW AND WAYNE UNION AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

This Society is composed of the farmers in the eastern part of Washtenaw county and the adjoining towns of Wayne, comprising a tract of farming country as old settled and as richly populated as any in the State. Its second annual fair was held at Ypsilanti on the 6th, 7th and 8th of October. Never could the weather have been more propitious for out door enjoyment than it was during the whole week. We were there the second day of the fair, and having in our mind a memory of the time when Ypsilanti was not, we could not but contrast the present with those days, when, with the children of the first emigrants, we wandered up and down the Indian trails that marked the river banks where now stand the principal streets of that beautiful town. The very spot where the fair was located was once an old Indian camping ground, and still bears the marks of where they buried their corn and roasted their venison in under ground ovens, in the deep indentations of its grassy surface. The ground is most beautifully and conveniently situated for the purposes of a county fair, being partly a level bottom in a bend of the Huron river, where are the cattle stands and the trial ring for horses, and partly a higher plateau upon which are erected the tents and hall of exhibition, the rise from the bottom land affording a fine view of the whole enclosure. The attendance was very large, the ground being crowded with visitors and exhibitors from morning till night. It was difficult to tell which of the halls was most attractive, so well filled and so skilfully arranged were all. In artistic good taste in matters of this kind, the ladies of Ypsilanti have few equals. At no other fairs have we ever seen the mosses and lichens and the wild grasses of our woods and fields, turned to such good account as they always are at the Ypsilanti exhibitions, in setting off the decorations of Floral Hall. On this occasion, the moss covered mound at the entrance, with the words "W. & W. UNION" written upon it in brilliant colored verbenas, attracted universal attention. Beyond the mound was the long flower stand with its rising shelves so skilfully covered with bouquets, vases and plates of flowers, the china artfully hidden by the foliage, that it looked more like a natural bank of bloom than any artificial arrangement of the kind we ever saw. The splendid grass bouquets and the graceful wreaths of forest leaves mingled with the crimson berries of the mountain ash, added much to the scene. The walls of the hall were hung with specimens of embroidery, needle, crochet and ornamental hair work, together with some very handsome

paintings. Among the samples of needle work we were shown collars, under-sleeves, handkerchiefs, skirts &c., which were the work of fingers far more used to handling the churn, the wash-board, the broom and the spinning wheel, than the needle, and yet as exquisitely wrought, and with as fine a finish as any lady need desire. In the Hall of domestic manufactures were substantial quilts, coverlets, pots of butter, cheeses, loaves of bread and jars of pickles and preserves, many of them made by the same industrious fingers that had wrought the muslin embroideries. The show cases of town millinery and store goods were fewer than are usually found at exhibitions of this kind, and yet there was no lack of the ornamental in any of the departments, showing the prevalence of a cultivated taste throughout the entire community over which their organization extends, which renders them in a great measure independent of the merchants and professional milliner; and hence their fair is really what it pretends to be, an agricultural fair—a sort of daguerreotype of the farming population. The crocks of butter, the cheeses, blankets, yarn, stockings, &c., were of excellent quality and in great abundance, as were also the fruits, melons and vegetables which covered the tables and walls of the large building appropriated to them, all giving good evidence of care and skillful cultivation.

There was among the fruit a plate of seedling grapes of extraordinary size, but the name of the exhibitor was not on the card, and, as the careful guardian would permit no one to taste, there was no way of judging of their quality except by the aroma, which was pronounced delicious by all who could get near enough to smell.

It seems to us a great detraction from the interest of such an exhibition to have the names of exhibitors withheld from visitors. A name attached to an article localizes it, and makes it a definite object with which the owners' name is readily associated in all after reference.

The show of farm implements was small; the object among them which attracted most notice was a model for a grain winnower, for separating foul seed from wheat. The operator was kept pretty busy through the day, showing the curious how thoroughly and perfect the work could be done.

There was an excellent show of horses and cattle; conspicuous among the former, were Washtenaw Chief, and a large and beautiful three year old bay colt belonging to Mr. John Phillips; and among the latter were the fine stock of Mr. Sly, of Plymouth, and that of the Messrs. Uhl, De Garmo, and others of Ypsilanti whose cattle were among the premium herds shown at the State fair.

The sheep, swine and poultry interests were very well represented, especially the former, of which there were great numbers. Altogether the fair was one of the best we ever saw. Ypsilanti may well be proud of it, and the members of the association have reason to congratulate themselves on their success in bringing out so fully the agricultural strength of the section of country embraced by their organization.

We regret not having been present to hear the the address of Hon. R. McClelland, but an arrangement to be at Jackson on that day prevented. For the many kind attentions received during our brief stay we return sincere thanks to the officers and members of the society.

THE JACKSON FAIR.

Owing to the cars bieng some hours behind the time we did not reach Jackson till late in the afternoon, and being obliged to leave before noon of the next day, our opportunities for examination were somewhat limited. Enough, however, could be seen to prove that the ladies of Jackson do not mean to be outdone in the production and manufacture of articles of beauty and usefulness. The spacious Hall was very well filled, though we observed that paintings and specimens of fine needle work were more plenty than the productions of the loom, the kitchen and the dairy. Butter, cheese, blankets, stockings and other articles of use among farmers were not as plenty as at the Ypsilanti fair, while show cases of millinery, merchants' dry goods, draperies, upholstery, daguerrean collections, &c., were much more numerous, giving the impression that in these departments it was more of a town than a county show. The collection of flowers was very fine, but being all arranged in china vases without the accompaniment of foliage or moss, or turf for a back ground, they made rather a formal appearance. There was too much spare room on the shelves, and the prettiest floral ornament on exhibition was hung high up in the dome of the building, almost out of sight. A little more compactness, less china, and a freer use of the leaves and mosses of the woods around them, would have made their pyramid a marvel of floral beauty. These things are not spoken of in a fault finding spirit, but simply as suggestive of improvements that might be made. The hall of exhibition is a fine building permanently located on the grounds belonging to the society, and therefore has every advantage over the temporary affairs usually got up for the occasion, as the improvements of one year may be made available the next.

The vegetables shown were remarkable for size and quality as well as for numbers. The potatoes especially commanded our admiration, from their great variety, their beauty of shape and their good size for table use. Fruits of various kinds also had a good representation, but, as our Editor was there, and will doubtless speak more advisedly than we can of these matters, as well as of farm implements, carriages, and stock, we shall leave them to him.

There was an immense gathering of people, and